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WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

The Arab Nationalists Movement

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THE ARAB NATIONALISTS MOVEMENT

The turmoil created in Arab politics by the outcome of the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 has opened the way for the various Arab nationalist organizations to begin to play a greater role in leading radical Arab forces.

The seizure of political power in the Republic of South Yemen by a regional unit of the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM) points up the possibility of this little-known organization becoming within the next decade an effective rival for Arab leadership to Nasir and the Baath. Although the regional (national) units of the ANM do not form a monolithic political machine, they do agree on basic tenets important to all radical Arabs--unity, ouster of Western influence, and revenge for the loss of Palestine to Israel.

Historical Development

The present leaders of the ANM, who are also the organization's founders, were first associated with one another in a student organization at the American University of Beirut in the late 1940s. Frustrated and angered over the loss of Palestine to Israel, the group sought ways to regain the lost territory. This remains one of the main tenets of the ANM and is one of the prime factors that holds together members from diverse backgrounds. By the early 1950s these students had graduated and returned to their own countries, where they began to proselytize among intellectuals, students, and professional men, emphasizing a dual creed of revenge and Arab unity of the Levantine countries.

One of the more important of the regional groups at that time was in Jordan, where George Habbash, who has led the ANM since its earliest days, had established himself. In 1955, however, he and others in his group were forced to flee to exile in Damascus as a result of their subversive activities. While in Syria, Habbash received money from Abd al-Hamid al Sarraj, then director of Syrian military intelligence. Returning to Jordan the following year, the group used its increased financial resources to expand, and also adopted the name, Arab Nationalists Movement.

A turning point for the ANM came in 1959 when Habbash and his followers were again forced to flee to Syria. They now came under the control of Egyptian intelligence, which had absorbed Sarraj's apparatus when Syria united with Egypt in the United Arab Republic (UAR). The Egyptians brought increased financial support and a tightened control over some of the loosely associated ANM coteries in the other Arab countries.

In August 1959 a conference of various regional ANM groups was held in Lebanon. The conference adopted a strongly pro-UAR policy, but this was not a unanimous decision. The organizations in the Levant were pro-UAR, but those in the Arab peninsula were unwilling to come under Egyptian control, an early illustration that all ANM adherents do not follow a consistent policy.

The conference also established a coordinating body, the Supreme Command, consisting of the leaders of each regional organization. The Command appears to be not so much an executive decision-making group as a mechanism whereby an attempt can be made to coordinate the policies of each regional organization. It was also a means to aid the establishment of new ANM organizations in those Arab states where none existed. The first headquarters of the Command was in Damascus, where Egyptian intelligence could exert control over the leadership. When Syria broke away from the UAR in 1961, however, the Supreme Command moved to Beirut, where it has remained.

In 1965, Egypt sought to consolidate all pro-Nasir factions in the various Arab countries into a single, Egyptian-dominated movement. In line with this policy, Cairo organized the Arab Socialist Union (ASU)--distinct from the Egyptian ASU--and all regional ANM groups were instructed to merge with the local ASU branches. Six ANM Supreme Command members were appointed to the ASU Higher Executive Board in Cairo.

The ANM, however, continued to act on its own and--to the extent that the character of the organization allowed--as a cohesive group. This soon led to difficulties in such countries as Kuwait, as well as in the Higher Executive Board of the ASU. By early 1967 it was reported that President Nasir had definitely broken with the ANM and was planning to counter its influence by establishing a new political group, the Sole Arab Movement (SAM). This official break will permit local ANM groups to shake the organization's pro-Nasir and pro-UAR image, and to establish local tactical alliances with both the Baath and Communist parties. The control that had once made the ANM practically an instrument of Egyptian intelligence in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria has

also been greatly shaken by the June war. Although the situation is in a state of flux at the present, it appears that the ANM organizations in these countries will be more independent in the future.

The Ideology of the ANM

The motto of the ANM is "Unity, Liberty, Revenge." "Revenge" for the loss of Palestine was the original motivation for the ANM, but by the late 1950s Arab "unity" was also being emphasized. Initially, the organization officially supported President Nasir as most likely to lead the Arabs to unity. In the aftermath of the June 1967 war, however, support from both wings of the ANM has now apparently shifted to ~~Algerian President Houari~~ Boumediene, whose call for a continuing state of war with Israel is more acceptable than Nasir's more moderate stance. "Liberty," the third objective, is defined as the absence of "foreign" (i.e., Western) influence in the Arab world.

One factor contributing to the spread of the ANM has been the vagueness of its program, which can thus satisfy the varied viewpoints of its adherents. Each regional ANM group adapts to conditions in its area, and stresses issues that are locally popular. In Syria, socialism is emphasized; in Kuwait, where some wealthy mercants support the local branch, Arab unity and domestic reform issues are foremost. Socialism is an important over-all tenet of the organization, however, because the ANM generally believes that it offers the only answer to the economic problems of the Arabs.

In the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war, the ANM decided to work in complete cooperation with the socialist (Communist) camp. It will encourage a Soviet presence in the Middle East as a counterweight to alleged US support for Israel. Moreover, the ANM now believes that, if necessary, concessions must be made in order to obtain Soviet backing. It also is pushing the idea that subversion of Arab states by one another must end so that a united front can be established. In an attempt to distinguish itself from the Baath and Nasir's ASU-SAM amalgam--which also stress Arab unity, socialism, and the eradication of "foreign" influence--the ANM is charging that the other groups are prepared to compromise over Israel and the return of Palestine to the Arabs.

Organizational Structure and Finances

In most Arab countries, the ANM has operated clandestinely behind various adopted names. This not only makes it difficult to ascertain its exact activities, but also hinders clear identification of the local groups that adhere to the ANM.

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SYRIA
—students, Palestinian refugees form bulk of membership; no broad political base
—one of several clandestine anti-Baath, pro-Nasir groups funded by Cairo
—may switch to more radical Arab leader, important political role still doubtful
LEBANON
—home office of George Habbash and Supreme Command
—membership concentrated among university students
—no direct political role but controls two newspapers; members associate with pro-Nasir groups
—heavy Egyptian financial support was reflected in strong pro-Nasir stand; status in flux following June war
LIBYA
—about 200 members, mostly students, intellectuals
—no overt political position; clandestine organization virtual instrument of Egyptian intelligence, which has trained members at "commando school," arranged for arms, explosives
—many members still in jail for plotting and rioting during anti-US demonstrations at Wheelus AFB in summer, 1967
YEMEN
—closely associated with NLF/ANM in Aden (South Yemen)
—pro-Nasir orientation a tactical expediency
—acted as intermediary in Kuwait ANM's financial support of NLF in South Yemen
TRIPOLI
BENGHAZI
BEIRUT
DAMASCUS
AMMAN
CAIRO
UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC
(EGYPT)

ARAB NATIONALISTS MOVEMENT

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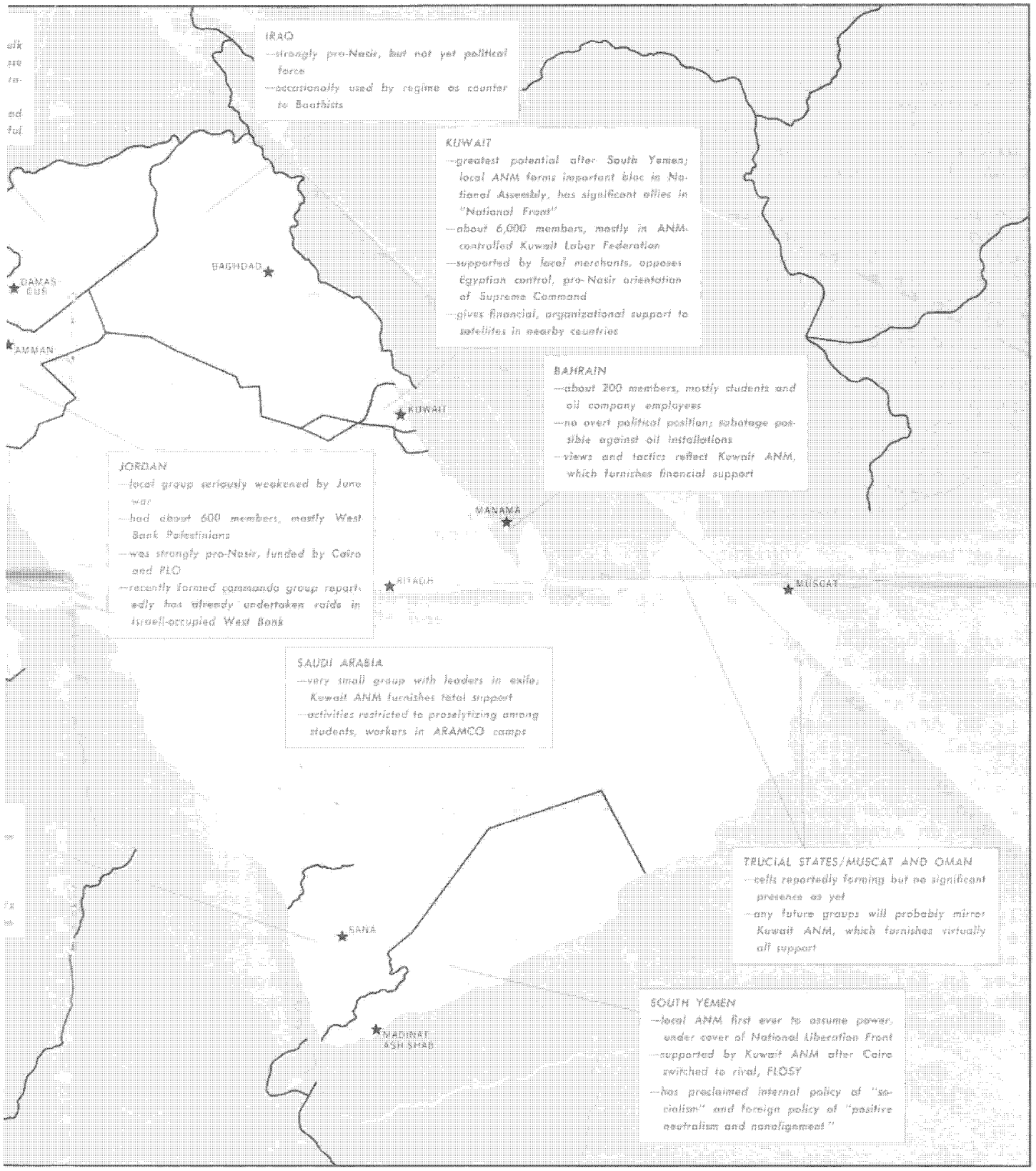
IRAQ
—strongly pro-Nasir, but not yet political force
—occasionally used by regime as counter to Baathists
KUWAIT
—greatest potential after South Yemen; local ANM forms important bloc in National Assembly, has significant allies in "National Front"
—about 6,000 members, mostly in ANM-controlled Kuwait Labor Federation
—supported by local merchants, opposes Egyptian control, pro-Nasir orientation of Supreme Command
—gives financial, organizational support to satellites in nearby countries
BAHRAIN
—about 200 members, mostly students and oil company employees
—no overt political position; sabotage possible against oil installations
—views and tactics reflect Kuwait ANM, which furnishes financial support
JORDAN
—local group seriously weakened by June war
—had about 600 members, mostly West Bank Palestinians
—was strongly pro-Nasir, funded by Cairo and PLO
—recently formed commando group reportedly has already undertaken raids in Israeli-occupied West Bank
SAUDI ARABIA
—very small group with leaders in exile; Kuwait ANM furnishes total support
—activities restricted to proselytizing among students, workers in ARAMCO camps
TRUCIAL STATES/MUSCAT AND OMAN
—cells reportedly forming but no significant presence as yet
—any future groups will probably mirror Kuwait ANM, which furnishes virtually all support
SOUTH YEMEN
—local ANM first ever to assume power, under cover of National Liberation Front
—supported by Kuwait ANM after Cairo switched to rival, FLOSY
—has proclaimed internal policy of "socialism" and foreign policy of "positive neutralism and nonalignment"
BAGHDAD
DAMASCUS
AMMAN
KUWAIT
MANAMA
RIYADH
MUSCAT
SANA
MADINAT ASH SHAB

~~SECRET~~ NO FOREIGN DISSEM
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It is known, however, that there is only one ANM organization at the international level--the Supreme Command, based in Beirut and led by George Habbash.

The basic unit in the regional organization is the cell, composed of four to ten members. Cell leaders are members of the next level in the hierarchy, called either a branch or section, and organized on either a regional or functional basis. The highest regional level is the country leadership, or central committee, which may often have an advisory group that deals with tactics in such functional divisions as trade unions or students. There is usually a secretary general, who heads the organization in the particular country and represents it on the international Supreme Command.

There is no information on the sources of the ANM's money in its very early days. Because of its small size at that time, however, it no doubt depended upon the personal resources of those involved. In 1955-56, the Jordanian and the Syrian regional organizations were put on the payroll of Syrian Army intelligence. When the UAR was formed in 1958, the Egyptian intelligence service took over the financing and apparently continued to do so until as late as 1966. This funding reportedly was handled through the Bank Misr in Beirut. Cairo also supports or has supported local ANM groups in Lebanon and Libya (where the ANM organization is a virtual instrument of Egyptian intelligence), and to some extent in Bahrain and South Yemen.

In a speech at a four-day ANM conference in Lebanon in 1959, Habbash noted that about 20 percent of the organization's income came from membership dues. It was reported at the time that a large portion of these dues came from Kuwait, indicating that the international ANM leadership was being given a percentage of the assets of regional ANM groups. Habbash said that the ANM's financial assets were being invested to produce a steady income. The Bank Misr also handles these ANM funds, and has invested in numerous ventures, including some in Kuwait. The Kuwait ANM has also furnished direct support to satellite groups in Saudi Arabia, Muscat/Oman, and the Persian Gulf area (Bahrain, the Trucial States), as well as to Yemen and South Yemen.

Local ANM Organizations

Although there are ANM affiliates in some 11 Arab countries, most are of little or no significance at present. The clandestine Saudi Arabian group, for example, is very small, its leaders are in exile in Kuwait, and its activities are restricted to proselytizing among students and workers in the ARAMCO oil camps in the eastern provinces. Even when the ANM assumes an overt political position, it rarely

occupies a pivotal role. Thus, the Iraqi ANM, still one of the strongly pro-Nasir groups, has been used occasionally by the regime as a counterweight to the Baathists, only to be cast aside again when it was no longer needed.

In South Yemen, on the other hand, an ANM front has come to power for the first time. A leading member of the National Liberation Front (NLF), which formed the independent government of South Yemen on 30 November 1967, recently stated that the NLF was the name adopted by the ANM organization in Aden. This official explained that the ANM, dissatisfied with the traditional leadership in the area, had worked with local nationalist groups to form the NLF in 1962; a year later, the NLF began to engage in violent armed opposition to the British authorities.

At first, the Front was supported by Egyptian intelligence, but Qahtan al-Shabi, now South Yemen's president and prime minister, was not completely trusted by the Egyptians. In late 1965, therefore, Cairo's support shifted to the newly formed Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen, and the NLF had to turn to the Kuwait ANM organization for assistance. The NLF did not formally break with the Egyptians until late 1967, however, because it needed a base of operations in areas of Yemen controlled by Cairo's puppet republican regime and because all support from the Kuwaiti ANM was channeled through Sana, the Yemeni republican capital.

The NLF has announced that South Yemen will follow an internal policy of socialism and a foreign policy based on "positive neutralism and nonalignment." It is probable, however, that the close ties between the US and Saudi Arabia, which epitomize the Arab traditionalism that the NLF opposes, will make relations between the US and the new government difficult.

Outlook

One of the few Arab countries where the ANM has the possibility of gaining legal control of a government is in Kuwait, where the ANM has had its greatest success after South Yemen. The Kuwait ANM forms an important bloc in the National Assembly, and ANM deputies have effected a tactical alliance with a number of important merchants, intellectuals, and civil servants, known collectively as the "National Front." The Kuwait ANM has never paid more than lip service to the pro-Egyptian policy fostered by Habbash and the Supreme Command. The rich merchants who are the main source of ANM money, although politically

opposed to the Emir and the ruling circles, are by no means eager to come under the control of Egypt and its radical economic policy. The effect of a recent polarization of the Kuwait ANM into moderate and radical wings, the latter supporting a strongly Marxist economic policy, is not as yet known.

Elsewhere in the Arab world, the prospects of the ANM are cloudy at best. The Bahrain ANM, for example, is small and its leaders are in exile in Kuwait. Its importance, however, lies not in the political opposition it offers the government but rather in the danger its clandestine activities pose to the physical assets of the Bahrain Oil Company. Subversive or terrorist actions may also lie ahead for other ANM groups. In Jordan recently, a new ANM commando group has been organized to carry out raids within Israel, and reportedly has already struck several times. Another possible outlet for ANM activists has been demonstrated in Libya, where many of the local clandestine group's members are now in jail on charges of plotting to overthrow the government by creating incidents at Wheelus Air Base during last summer's anti-US riots. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM EXCEPT UK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND)

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